


India



From
Village to Village in
Delhi District



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OR

Some of Miss McLeavy's experiences
in camp.

"The Rosary Given Up."

I wonder if you can follow me out a little way to a village surrounded by big shady trees, and fields of wheat, green and gold, almost ready for cutting. I am led by the workers to a cot under a tree. As we sit and sing, "Jesus Christ is the only Saviour," a number of people attracted by the sound of our voices, gather round, till a group of almost 300 is before me. On my right are some of our Christians, and on the left are others, not yet baptized. As I tell the story of Creation, Man's Fall, and the Saviour from Sin, you can almost hear a pin drop, so wrapt is the attention. An old man sits a little way off, with a rosary in his hands, repeating the name of God, holding very closely a charm, which he says has been given by his priest to keep off the Evil Spirit. He looks very miserable, and says, "I have tried everything, but there is no

peace in my heart, and within the last week, I have spent 10 rupees (\$3.32) in sacrificing to my deity, Jaharpir, but am still as restless as ever."

I then tell him the story of Christ's dying love for him a sinner. He replies, "It cannot be possible that Christ loves me ; you don't know what a sinner I am ; how can my sins ever be forgiven?" Saying which he put both his hands up to his face, and bowed his head in sorrow. I quoted to him the verse, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," and putting my hand on him, I said, "Do you believe that Christ can do this for you now?" He cried "Jesus Christ saves me now," and with a look of peace on his face, gave up his rosary, saying, "From now on, I am His follower alone."

The Shrine Demolished.

A few miles further, and we come to another village. The outlook is anything but cheering. An old blind man sits near a broken down hut, looking cross and treacherous, cursing Christianity, and muttering to himself that nothing will induce him to give up his idol, which is over a hundred years old, and stands right ahead of me, like a hideous monster.

The singing of the hymn, "Put your whole heart on Jesus," attracts crowds of people. But the old man sits stern and solemn, unmoved. As I tell the story of Baal, and the fate of its 450 priests at the hand of one man of God, and on my knees, I plead with the people that "this is the day of salvation, do not wait till to-morrow, Choose you to-day whom you will serve," a great hush falls over the company, numbering over 200. An old woman draws near and sits at my feet, saying, "It is true, how can we hide our sins from Jesus?" and "we all have to go one day" I tell them that it is in their own hands to choose Eternal Life, or Death. As I talk to the woman, I hear sounds as of something being broken down; the old man with a spade in his hand was tearing down every stone of the shrine, saying with beaming face, "Jesus saves me, Jesus saves me." It was only the power of the Lord which could have worked such a wonderful change in such a short time.

Instant Salvation.

Again as we went our way in an ox-cart to a village 4 miles off, on our way the driver got down for a smoke in a village where there were a number of

high caste men, who very soon surrounded the cart. I asked them if they knew why I had come. They said, "No, we wonder why you have come." Taking up my Bible, I read, John 3:16, and began talking to them about the "Way of Salvation."

I said, "You may search the world over, but there is only the one way; the way of the cross leads to a crown." I told them how Jesus had given His life for them, of His death and sufferings on the cross. I was struck by the look of a man, who was holding on to the wheel of my cart, just drinking in the words, and saying softly to himself, "O Jesus, Jesus, I know you are true, and this is what I have searched for, for years, the salvation you alone can give."

Turning to him, I said, "Brother, do you believe He can save you now?" He said, "I have tried everything, but failed to find any comfort, and now at the very name of Jesus a feeling of peace fills my heart." I said, "Then take Him;" He said, "I do, now and forever." After having talked in that village for nearly an hour, the driver returned, and we went on. Suddenly I noticed this same man walking close behind with a rosary in his hand, turning over the beads

and taking the name of Jesus. The Lord led me to call out to him, and he came running up, and I said, "Brother why are you doing this?" He replied, "As a means of help." I said, "Nothing is needed when the Lord has made your heart His dwelling place." Realizing this, with his face aglow, his eyes sparkling, he threw the rosary into my lap, saying, "Jesus is in my heart, I don't want this any longer." This was truly immediate salvation, and what a victory over Satan!

The Blind Man's Shrine.

Another interesting experience was, when we entered a village where a group of Christians were seated, ready for a meeting. As we talked and gave them the message of the "Lost Sheep," how with what care and love the shepherd brought the sheep to the fold, an old blind man sitting a little distance away from the others, as if he had no part or lot with them, and looking very sad, attracted my attention. I turned and said to him, "I dare say you have sacrificed and spent a great deal of money on your idols, in the hope of regaining your sight, but all to no effect, for Christ is the only true Healer, and He has now

sent me with a message to you especially, that He can make your spiritual vision so keen, that you can see Him in all His beauty and goodness. Will you not listen to His voice, as He says to you now, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" His poor worn face wore an expression of deep longing and wonder, and as he came up close to me, he said, "Tell me what to do." I said "Break down that shrine, which has been a curse to you all your life, and take Jesus, who is the only one who can be your prop in these declining years." He said, "O, but the shrine is two or three hundred years old, and belonged to my fore-fathers; how can I break it down?" I said, "In His strength everything is possible." Then we prayed, and as we got up from our knees, the required strength seemed to have been given to the old man; he called to the worker to lead him to the shrine. He still had some opposition to meet, for his old wife remonstrated with him indignantly, refusing to let it be broken down. But he never faltered, for the God-given strength was in Him. With a look of determination on his face, he called to his son to bring him a spade, and each stone was removed from its place and thrown away, with

the words, "Jesus Christ is my Saviour from to-day, as long as I live, and when I die He will take me to His home above." Praise God for his immediate and unwavering faith!

The Courage of Three Women.

Still another instance of God using His servants. There were a number of women gathered for a meeting, and as I told them of the possibility of breaking with idolatry and receiving Christ as their Saviour, and losing their fear of the Evil Spirits which had held them in bondage so long, one woman with tears in her eyes, acknowledged how for years she had been a slave to the fear of the Sweeper's deity, Lalbeg, and told how she had sacrificed and made many offerings to him, for fear of what he might do to her children. I told her of Jesus Christ and His wonderful love, and His plan of salvation; that He required nothing from us but our heart's devotion in return for His precious blood which He had so freely shed to wash away our sins. But she said, "Surely this is not for me now, after all these years of idolatry." I replied that a physician was needed for those who were sick, and that Jesus Christ had come to seek and to save the lost; how He had saved Mary. She then took me

into her house and showed me her shrine, and taking a big stone, she broke it down, saying, "I have done with that, and will now only have the Jesus who has shed His blood for me." She had scarcely finished speaking, when three others, touched and impressed by the love of the Saviour, did likewise. It was truly a day of victory. We felt that it was only the Lord's power that helped the women to fight the devil as they truly did that day, and were victorious.

Conversion of Devil Priest.

Still further proofs of the way the Lord works through His own, were shown in another village, where several people were waiting for us, to hear our message. As we began singing the hymn, "Adore Christ with your whole heart," I noticed the people moving about uncomfortably, as if there was something which they wished to hide. Then I was attracted by a bundle of rags, on moving which, I found a shrine to one of their deities, named Jaharpir. The old man to whom it belonged was very indignant at my teachings of Jesus Christ, and ordered me to get out of the village. I realised that the Lord had a great victory for us that day, and was not in the least worried or confused.

I told in very simple language, of Christ's authority to cast out devils, and how He alone can save from sin and give salvation. Very plainly was the story of King Jesus told, and by the time we had sung another hymn, and had a prayer, the old man was greatly humbled, and begged me to say something more, before I left.

I then told the story of the three Hebrew youths, who were put into the fiery furnace and delivered by Jesus, saying, that if He is in our hearts, there is no fear of idols or evil spirits hurting us. Like a streak of lightning, a gleam of light broke through the density of the old man's brain, and with his face aglow, he said, clapping his hands, "I hear the voice of Jesus, and from to-day, I will leave all else and follow Him." Thereupon he got up, and breaking down his shrine, he gave me his rosary and one rupee (32 cents), in the name of Jesus.

Brave Decision of two Young Men.

It was getting dark as we reached another village, and the workers were anxious to hurry over and leave it, and as I too was tired, having been out from early morning, I ordered the driver to go on. But a voice inside seemed to call me back and bid me stay. As we went in,

a number of men and women were gathered round a fire. I smilingly said to them, "Salaam ! I have brought you a message from Jesus ; I don't know quite for which of you it is meant, but there is some one here who needs the message, for He sent me back here, when I was planning to go on." I then told them the story of the blind man, how in spite of the rebukes of the people, he cried out to Jesus for mercy, and that there were some there that night, who were blind with sin, and the same Jesus was there to give them sight. Two young stalwart men came forward and said, "We have been worshippers of this shrine of Lalbeg for generations, and now you are giving us a different message, which we have not heard before." I in reply said to them, "Just as the king chooses the best soldiers for his army, so the Lord wants the best for His service to fight with and defeat Satan, and just such young men as you are the best soldiers." Noticing a shrine a little way off, I said that we cannot serve two masters, that the Lord has said "Who-soever believeth on me shall have everlasting life," that one step over the line would mean salvation, and that there was no time for delay, as life was uncertain, and the homeward call might come at any moment.

These two men listened intently, and as I said, "Brothers, what do you think Jesus would have you do to-day?" without a word, they got up and broke down the shrine, and sang "Hallelujah to His name, from this time forth we shall be in His army." We immediately appointed one man to cut off the sacred locks of hair, and the other to break down any remnants of idolatry there might be left. And they promised to enlist many of their friends and relations in the Lord's army, to do battle for Him.

Transformation of a Hindu Priest.

A number of people are gathered together on a platform covered with a thatched roof. As we enter, they all stand up, and folding their hands, greet us with a respectful salaam. We begin to sing a hymn, "Help me dear Jesus," and then after prayer, I tell them the story of Creation, how God made man in His own image, how sin came and destroyed the image, and the need of a Saviour. And follow up with the story of Christ, his Incarnation, life, and death on the cross for sinners. As I speak, a priest stands by, listening very attentively. I hardly noticed him in my eagerness to make the "Way of Salvation" plain to the

people all round me. Suddenly he coming near, and placing his hands on my feet, said "I have a diploma in the shape of this rosary, fitting me for the rank of priest. Every year I take up hundreds of pilgrims to the famous shrine of Kaila, and make heaps of money, but there is confusion in my heart and brain all the time. Now that you have told the story of this Jesus, and all His sufferings for sin, I realize more than ever the wickedness in my own heart, and feel that if I die I shall surely go to hell. But how am I to earn my living if I give up this trade?"

I then showed him that not a sparrow could fall without God's knowledge, and how that if the birds and beasts are fed by Him, man who has been created in His own image, surely must be more valuable than these. That the Lord said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," and that if any man hears His voice, and would open the door, the Lord would come in and sup with him, showing that none of His children would suffer need. I said that I was sure that Christ was knocking at that very moment at the door of his heart. The look on the man's face was one of amazement and longing. I then knelt down and prayed with him, and asked the Lord to fill his longing heart. You would hardly credit the change that came

over him in a moment. Raising his head, with a look of determination on his face, and unasked by me, he gave me his rosary, and said, "This is the Saviour I have longed for all these years." This was truly a great victory. for to give up the position and money he made as a heathen priest was indeed no small thing, and he firmly declared in the presence of numbers of people, that henceforth he was going to be a priest of Christ.

High caste people determined to hear the Gospel.

As we were hurrying on, the ox-cart was surrounded by a number of high caste men and women. The headman of the village stood before the oxen, preventing them going on. As I enquired the cause of this, they plead with me to go to their village and tell them something of Jesus. For a moment I hesitated, telling them that people were waiting for me two miles further on, but they refused to be put off, and seemed so eager, that I yielded to their importunity. As the cart neared the village, we were met by groups of men and women, and in a few minutes, we were surrounded by a crowd of more than 300 people. We sang "Jesus Christ saves me," and then I told of this one Jesus who

had really paid the price of salvation by His own blood, and that all He wants of us is our whole heart's affection. I noticed several of the women weeping, and could hear them saying to each other. "This is true, this is true." After two and a quarter hours of speaking and singing, when my voice utterly failed me, or "sat down," as the Indian people say, I begged them to let me go on. But they said, "We will get you milk to drink, and after you have rested, you can tell us more of this wonderful story." But as I still had another meeting to attend, and then a drive of 13 miles to our tents, and it was then after six in the evening, I had to leave them or this time, promising to visit them again, on my next tour. They said, "If you will come again, we will be glad to put one of our houses at your disposal, and entertain you here for three days." The people in the villages are indeed hungry for the "Bread of Life." Would that there were more to give it to them!

N. B.—Miss McLeavy is our District Evangelist, and these are some of her camping experiences, as she told them to us,—ROCKWELL & CHARLOTTE CLANCY.

